

24 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with Commandant of Chi Hoa Prison

1. Through the good offices of Mr. Bordenkircher of PSD, I was able to tour the Chi Hoa National Prison in Saigon on 20 May and talk with the Commandant, Lt Col Pham Van Lien (Ret).

2. Col Lien said he has about 1,400 political prisoners as follows:

Sentenced by military courts	500
Detained by Security Committee order	500
Unsentenced	400
Total	1,400

(Figures are approximate.)

3. There is no practice of early release of these prisoners for good conduct. Prior to the end of sentence, the prison makes a recommendation to the Central Security Committee in Saigon, for release of the prisoner or for additional detention. In the latter case the Committee will normally order an additional period of detention, usually six months or a year; but this process may be repeated until it is deemed wise to release the prisoner to society.

4. Regarding the various grants of amnesty by the President, the Commandant said VC were released only if old or ill. The Government does not like to release able-bodied young VC, even though their conduct in prison has been good.

[Redacted]
Legal Counsel

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